MEMO

TO: Transportation and Communication Committee

FROM: Sarah Adams, Associate Planner, (213) 236-1818, e-mail: adams@scag.ca.gov

DATE: June 3, 2004

SUBJECT: California High Speed Train System

Recommended Action:
Receive and File

Summary:

The California High Speed Rail Authority proposes a high speed train system for intercity travel in California between major metropolitan centers of Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area in the north, through the Central Valley, to Los Angeles and San Diego in the south. The Authority prepared a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) to analyze the proposed high speed train system and compares it with a No Project/No Action Alternative and a Modal Alternative.

Attached for the Committee's information, is a summary of Staff's comments on the Draft Program EIR/EIS. The comments center on the Regional Transportation Plan, Planned Regional Projects, Funding, Coordination and Mitigation.

Fiscal Impact:
The staff resources necessary for Intergovernmental Review are contained within the adopted Fiscal Year 2003 / 2004 SCAG Budget.

COMMENTS ON THE
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR THE
CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED TRAIN SYSTEM
SCAG NO I 20040087

CRITICAL AND URGENT ISSUES

In order to proceed in the Southern California region, the proposed California High Speed Train System (HST) must be part of SCAG's long range Regional Transportation Plans and must be included in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) in order to receive funding. A program-level EIR has been certified for all elements of the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Our comments are based on this level of analysis in our region.

Funding
Several critical issues must be resolved in order to maintain existing conformity in the region. Such conformity includes the maintenance of financial constraint in the RTP with the inclusion of the proposed California High-Speed Train System. Several issues in the Draft EIR/EIS may affect financial constraint in Southern California and must be addressed.

- *State and Local Funding.* As noted, construction costs of the HST alternative are estimated at $33-37 billion, a portion of which is proposed to be financed through "existing airport user fees and passenger facility charges...local funds (from existing sources), and existing state transportation revenue sources (e.g., gas tax, sales tax on gasoline)." SCAG is concerned about the use of such existing local funds and state transportation revenue sources. In most cases, these funding sources are already obligated for state and regional projects in the RTP and would not be able to sustain the financial demands of implementing this system.

- *Federal Funding.* A majority of the $33-37 billion cost of implementing the high-speed rail system would be financed through general obligation bonds and federal grants or loans. However, the potential impact this could have on future state and local funding needs for existing or planned infrastructure is not discussed; nor is the impact on federal, state and local funding sources addressed. The potential effects on availability of federal funds for other projects in the state or regions of the state requesting financial support must be addressed.

- *Operations and Maintenance.* On page 1-1, it is stated that the California High-Speed Rail system would have revenues in excess of operations and maintenance costs. However, in Chapter 4, annual operation and maintenance costs per train mile are given as approximately $153 million, and it is stated that "(Operation and Maintenance) Costs do not include the costs from train operations, maintenance of fleet of train sets, propulsion fuel (electricity), or

marketing and reservations for the service." Following this statement, in table 4.3-3, additional O&M costs are given as:

Train Operations	178.2 million
Equipment Maintenance	208.9 million
Marketing and Reservations	37.5 million
Power	126.1 million
Total	**550.7 million**

With these additional estimates, it is not clear which numbers are being used in the conclusion in Chapter 1 that the system will produce revenues above O&M costs. This must be specified in the final document.

Alignments

- Several alignments proposed by the California High Speed Rail Authority are similar to proposed alignments of SCAG's Inter-Regional Maglev system. These alignment similarities include Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to March Inland Port in Riverside County which includes the Initial Operating Segment (IOS) from West LA to Ontario, the Antelope Valley alignment through Palmdale, LAX to Irvine in Orange County and Union Station to Anaheim (see attached Map 1). The similarities in these two systems necessitate a high level of coordination and partnership during any further planning and/or implementation. Issues such as alignments, station locations, environmental costs/benefits, community impacts, regional needs, commuter services and interaction with existing modes of transit must be thoroughly analyzed before implementation of a regional rail system to ensure the greatest degree of efficiency and service in the SCAG region. These issues are brought forward in SCAG's 2004 RTP Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for projects in our region.

- SCAG has adopted an Interregional Maglev System in its long range RTP since 1998. Given the scope of this system, which would cover most of Southern California, the Final EIR/EIS should consider how Maglev relates to the proposed HST in this region. Most issues are not yet resolved. Future EIS work will have to resolve these issues. As SCAG continues to develop the IOS on the Maglev Deployment Program, the California High Speed Train System segments will be included and analyzed on a project specific EIS/EIR level.

- SCAG's Regional Council has supported the Antelope Valley corridor of the California High Speed Rail Proposal (Resolution #96-357-1-B). Currently, the High Speed Rail DEIR/EIS provides two alternatives from Bakersfield to Sylmar: one along I-5, one through the Antelope Valley. SCAG would like to reiterate its support for the Antelope Valley alignment in this corridor.

Coordination

- Effective coordination (as detailed below) could be beneficial to both Maglev and California High Speed Rail. Such coordination will lead to enhancement of the state and enhancement of the region.

- The California High Speed Rail Authority should coordinate all planning and implementation activities with SCAG and other regional stakeholders, specifically with regard to Maglev, aviation, environment, growth, access, finance and community development. This coordination should entail consideration of the goals, policies, and technical information in the adopted RTP and working with SCAG Committees and Task Forces to help ensure that Southern California's priorities are fully considered. SCAG can provide an important forum to help the Authority reach out to cities and counties in Southern California to collaboratively finalize alignments, design, and mitigation. Also, the Authority should work with SCAG's Growth Visioning effort to help implement Transit-Oriented-Development around proposed stations. This coordination will help support their subsequent project-level environmental reviews for segments in the SCAG region.

- Coordination of PEIR and site-specific EIR/EIS for the proposed California High Speed Train System is essential to maintain constraint and air quality conformity in the Southern California region. Conformity in long range transportation plans requires both emissions constraint as well as financial constraints. The region must remain within the boundaries of available resources to ensure both constraints are met to ensure regional conformity. Please note that SCAG will be conducting independent air quality conformity analysis on high-speed rail segments in our region.